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SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: GCC MINISTERIALS -- MORE OF THE SAME ON IRAQ,  
IRAN, AND NUCLEAR PROGRAMS FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) ministers of defense, foreign affairs, and national security met on July 3 in Riyadh. This second extraordinary meeting of the GCC ministers focused primarily on Iraq, and was followed on July 4 by a meeting of the GCC foreign ministers. The ministers addressed political developments at the regional level, but Iranian nuclear proliferation dominated the discussions during this meeting. End Summary.

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2nd Extraordinary Meeting  
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12. (C) The July 3 meeting of GCC ministers of defense, foreign affairs, and intelligence and security echoed the sentiments expressed during the May 15th Ninth Consultative Summit of the GCC in Muscat. In both meetings, leaders called for a "concerted stance" to ensure the security of GCC countries, given the ongoing instability in neighboring Iraq.

13. (C) According to the Saudi Press Agency, Prince Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Aziz, the Saudi deputy defense minister, chaired the meeting. He urged GCC leaders to take a "unified position" for dealing with security issues in Iraq. He called for stopping "the current deterioration in Iraq," encouraging Iraqi "national unity and regional integrity," and mobilizing efforts amongst Iraqi citizens to fight sectarian divisions, local differences, and terrorist threats. Prince Abd al-Rahman concluded his remarks by referring to the June 14 Arab League Foreign Ministers' meeting in Cairo and stated that the current GCC extraordinary meeting will support the Arab League meeting by issuing recommendations for joint action to be taken by GCC countries to ensure security for the GCC and increased stability in Iraq. (Note: the Arab League foreign ministers are reportedly planning to meet later this month as follow-up to the GCC meetings. End Note.)

14. (C) In a press statement following the July 3 meeting, Prince Abd al-Rahman stated that the GCC countries are forming an "undivided bloc" in their stance on Iraq and other critical issues in the region. He said that, "It is necessary for all Iraqis to unify to secure Iraq from any regional division," because, "what is happening now is definitely going to affect the security and stability of our countries." Despite Prince Abd al-Rahman's repeated emphasis on the importance of this meeting for ensuring security and stability in the region, GCC Secretary-General Dr. Abd

al-Rahman Hamad al-Attiyah downplayed its timing, stating in a press release that the extraordinary meeting was a "continuation of the previous meeting held in Jeddah three years ago," and it was "natural" for the ministers to meet again to evaluate the security and political situations in the region.

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103rd GCC Ministerial Council Meeting  
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¶5. (C) Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal chaired the July 4 meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council in Jeddah. Prince Saud outlined the GCC position on key regional issues -- namely the Palestinian situation, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran -- in his opening remarks, as reported by the Saudi Press Agency. He called upon the Palestinian factions to respect the Mecca Accord and encouraged the Arab Committee charged with investigating events in Gaza to act speedily. (Note: During their extraordinary meeting in Cairo on June 14, Arab League foreign ministers formed a committee to investigate the situation in Gaza. End Note.) Prince Saud also called for a speedy review of the Iraqi constitution in order to support national reconciliation. He urged the Lebanese government to conduct a national dialogue in order to find a solution agreeable to all parties.

¶6. (C) Iranian issues dominated the final communique issued by the GCC Foreign Ministers. The communique stressed the importance of Iran's adherence to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) requirements and urged continued Iranian dialogue with the international community. It also called for making the entire Middle East region free from weapons of mass destruction, while at the same time allowing for countries to acquire nuclear expertise for peaceful purposes.

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Prince Saud commented after the meeting that GCC member states all respect the articles of international agreements pertaining to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, stating that these regulations should apply to all regional countries, including Israel.

¶7. (C) The communique highlighted the importance of Iraq's sovereignty, unity, and independence, and condemned any endeavor causing sectarian splits in the country. It also called for avoiding intervention in Iraq's "international" affairs, while supporting the ongoing conciliatory efforts.

¶8. (C) The communique called for dialogue among the Palestinian factions and reminded them of the promises they had made in the Mecca Accord. The communique emphasized the need to respect Palestinian legitimacy under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as respect for "legitimate" Palestinian institutions, including the elected national legislative council. Additionally, the statement "demanded" the return of the Gaza strip to its status prior to Hamas takeover-- namely, to restore the "legitimate" Palestinian institutions to places of authority in Gaza. The communique also called for dialogue in Lebanon, Sudan, and Somalia.

¶9. (C) COMMENT: The Saudi press seemed intent on downplaying the GCC meetings. However, the recent flurry of meetings and activities of regional leaders and bodies such as the GCC and the Arab League, as well as our private discussions with Saudi government contacts, suggest that there remains great concern about regional crises -- especially the instability in Iraq and Iran's nuclear and regional ambitions and activities. While that concern was not translated into any declared concrete action or new public announcements, it is clear is that the Saudis continue to actively engage with their regional partners to build a united Arab approach to these key regional issues. There was undoubtedly much discrete and confidential discussion of key issues at these meetings, which would not have been covered

in the local press. We will report on these discussions in  
septels as more information becomes available. END COMMENT.  
FRAKER